

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STOCKH 03864 01 OF 02 161315Z

41

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AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY LONDON

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UNCLAS SECTION 1 OF 2 STOCKHOLM 3864

PASS DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ELAB, SW

SUBJECT: MILITARY UNIONS IN SWEDEN

REF: (A) STATE 163206, (B) DAO INTELLIGENCE REPORT FROM
STOCKHOLM NO. 6-892-0256-76 DATED JULY 12, 1976.

1. THE STATE OFFICIALS ACT OF 1965 EXTENDED THE RIGHTS OF
ASSOCIATION AND COLLECTIVE BARGAINING TO ALL PUBLIC EMPLOYEES.
NO DISTINCTION WAS MADE BETWEEN THE CIVIL AND MILITARY SECTORS,
THUS GRANTING THESE RIGHTS TO THE LATTER AS WELL. HOWEVER,
CONSCRIPTS ARE EXCLUDED FROM COVERAGE, PRESUMABLY ON GROUNDS
THAT THEY ARE NOT REGULAR EMPLOYEES. THE LEGISLATION PERMITS
STRIKES AND LOCKOUTS.

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PAGE 02 STOCKH 03864 01 OF 02 161315Z

2. THERE ARE THREE MILITARY UNIONS DIFFERENTIATED BY RANK

WHOSE JURISDICTIONS RANGE ACROSS THE THREE BRANCHES OF THE SERVICE, E.G., ARMY, NAVY AND AIR FORCE. THESE ARE AS FOLLOWS:

A) COMPANY OFFICERS UNION (KOF). FOUNDED IN 1917.

IT HAS ABOUT 5,500 MEMBERS WHICH ADDS UP TO VIRTUALLY 100 PERCENT OF ITS JURISDICTION. THE KOF REPRESENTS SECOND LIEUTENANTS, FIRST LIEUTENANTS AND CAPTAINS AT THE COMPANY LEVEL. MEMBERSHIP HAS COME UP THROUGH THE RANKS AND UNTIL COMMISSIONED VIA REFORMS INTRODUCED ABOUT THREE YEARS AGO WERE SERGEANT-MAJORS AND WARRANT OFFICERS. THE KOF IS AFFILIATED WITH THE CENTRAL ORGANIZATION OF SALARIED EMPLOYEES (TCO).

B) PLATOON OFFICERS UNION (POF). IT HAS ABOUT 9,000 MEMBERS. FOUNDED IN 1918. EXTENT OF ORGANIZATION IS LIKEWISE VIRTUALLY 100 PERCENT. THE POF GROUPS NON-COMMISSIONED OFFICERS FROM THE RANK OF CORPORAL TO MASTER-SERGEANT. IT IS ALSO AFFILIATED WITH TCO.

C) SWEDISH UNIONS OF OFFICERS (SOF). FOUNDED IN 1932. IT HAS ABOUT 6,000 MEMBERS INCLUDING APPROXIMATELY 5,500 ACTIVE OFFICERS AND 500 CADETS. THE SOF REPRESENTS OFFICERS WHO ARE CADET SCHOOL GRADUATES FROM THE RANK OF SECOND LIEUTENANT ALL THE WAY UP TO SERVICE CHIEFS AND THE SUPREME COMMANDER. ORGANIZATION OF JURISDICTION IS ALSO ALMOST COMPLETE. THE SOF IS AFFILIATED WITH SACO/SR (THE SWEDISH CONFEDERATION OF PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS/NATIONAL FEDERATION OF GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES) WHICH LARGELY REPRESENTS SENIOR CIVIL SERVANTS AS WELL AS PROFESSIONAL AND SEMI-PROFESSIONAL PEOPLE, INCLUDING SELF-EMPLOYED.

3. ALTHOUGH BARRED SO FAR FROM FORMAL UNIONIZATION, THE CONSCRIPTS POSSESS AN INSTRUMENTALITY (ACTUALLY INITIATED BY THE MILITARY AUTHORITIES) THROUGH WHICH THEY CAN PRESENT DEMANDS RE TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF THEIR SERVICE. THIS IS THE CONSCRIPTS CONFERENCE WHICH IS CONVENED ANNUALLY. CONSCRIPTS NAME THEIR OWN DELEGATES TO THE CONFERENCE OF WHICH THE END PRODUCT IS A SET OF RESOLUTIONS. CONTINUITY BETWEEN CONFERENCES IS PROVIDED BY A WORKING GROUP WHICH FUNCTIONS AS AN EXECUTIVE BODY. AT LAST TWO ANNUAL MEETINGS, ONE OF THE DEMANDS WAS FOR AUTHORIZATION TO UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 03 STOCKH 03864 01 OF 02 161315Z

FORM A REGULAR UNION. THE SUPREME COMMANDER IS OPPOSED AND HIS VIEW WILL PROBABLY CARRY, AT LEAST FOR NEXT FEW YEARS.

4. THE MILITARY UNIONS ARE FULLY INTEGRATED INTO THE SWEDISH COLLECTIVE BARGAINING SYSTEM AND ARE TREATED IN PRECISELY THE SAME WAY AS THEIR CIVILIAN COUNTERPARTS. THE KOF AND POF FORM PART OF TCO-S, A NEGOTIATING

CARTEL COMPRISING ELEVEN UNIONS REPRESENTING CIVIL SERVANTS EMPLOYED BY THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT. TCO-S BARGAINS WITH THE NATIONAL COLLECTIVE BARGAINING OFFICE (SAV), A SEPARATE AUTHORITY WHICH NEGOTIATES ON BEHALF OF THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT. THE INITIAL ROUND OF BARGAINING RESULTS IN A BASIC NATIONAL AGREEMENT, WHICH INCLUDES THE FINANCIAL FRAMES AND GUIDELINES FOR THE UNION NEGOTIATIONS WHICH THEN ENSUE. IN THE SECOND AND FINAL ROUND, KOF AND POF REPRESENTATIVES PLAY A MORE DIRECT ROLE ALONG-SIDE TCO-S IN NEGOTIATIONS WITH A SAV SUB-GROUP WHICH IS ALSO JOINED BY REPRESENTATIVES OF THE SWEDISH DEFENSE STAFF. THE SECOND AGREEMENT FLESHES IN THE DETAILS ON WORKING CONDITIONS FOR KOF AND POF MEMBERS AND CONTAINS THE USUAL REFERENCES TO PAY SCALES, HOURS, OVERTIME, PENSIONS, ALLOWANCES, ETC. BARGAINING PROCEDURES FOR SOF ARE THE SAME EXCEPT THAT SACO/SR REPLACES TCO-S AS THE BARGAINING AGENT.

5. THE NATIONAL SERVICE ACT OF 1959 EMPOWERS AUTHORITIES IN TIME OF WAR OR OTHER EMERGENCIES TO PROHIBIT PERSONS AGED 16 TO 70 FROM LEAVING THEIR EMPLOYMENT. WHEN DECLARED, THIS WOULD PRESUMABLY NULLIFY OR SUSPEND MANY OF THE PROVISIONS OF COLLECTIVE AGREEMENTS. WE ARE INQUIRING INTO OTHER POSSIBLE LAWS OR REGULATIONS WHICH MAY FURTHER PROTECT RIGHTS OF COMMAND AND, IF SUCH EXIST, WILL FORWARD INFORMATION SEPTEL.

6. ONLY LABOR DISPUTE ON RECORD INVOLVING A MILITARY UNION, IN THIS CASE SOF, OCCURRED IN EARLY 1971. FOLLOWING BREAKDOWN OF NATIONAL CONTRACT NEGOTIATIONS, SACO AND SR (WHICH MERGED IN 1975) CALLED SERIES OF SPOT STRIKES AFFECTING STRATEGICALLY PLACED CIVILIAN GOVERNMENT PERSONNEL. GOVERNMENT RETALIATED BY LOCKING OUT
UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 04 STOCKH 03864 01 OF 02 161315Z

SOME 30,000 MIDDLE AND UPPER GRADE EMPLOYEES, INCLUDING SENIOR MILITARY OFFICERS BELONGING TO SOF. BOTH STRIKES AND LOCKOUTS WERE TERMINATED BY THE RIKSDAG THROUGH AN

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PAGE 01 STOCKH 03864 02 OF 02 161408Z

55

ACTION EUR-12

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UNCLAS SECTION 2 OF 2 STOCKHOLM 3864

EMERGENCY POWERS ACT WHICH REMAINED VALID FOR A PERIOD OF SIX WEEKS. IN THE LANGUAGE OF THE ACT, IT WAS ENACTED TO END "A STRIKE ACTION...WHICH THREATENS ESSENTIAL CITIZEN INTERESTS...."

7. THE ACT ON CO-DETERMINATION AT WORK PASSED IN JUNE (STOCKHOLM 3188) GIVES UNIONS IN BOTH PRIVATE AND PUBLIC SECTORS THE RIGHT TO NEGOTIATE AGREEMENTS ESTABLISHING JOINT LABOR-MANAGEMENT RESPONSIBILITY FOR ALMOST EVERY ASPECT OF EXECUTIVE DECISION-MAKING. THIS WILL POSE SPECIAL PROBLEMS FOR THE GOVERNMENT AND THE MILITARY. TO GUARD THE PUBLIC INTEREST WHERE CIVIL SERVICE AND MILITARY UNIONS ARE CONCERNED, THE LEGISLATION CREATES A SPECIAL COMMITTEE, THE MAJORITY OF WHOSE MEMBERSHIP WILL BE MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT, TO RULE ON CASES IN WHICH UNION DEMANDS COULD POSSIBLY THWART OR DISTORT GOVERNMENTAL POLICY OR THE POLITICAL PROCESS ITSELF.
UNCLASSIFIED

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PAGE 02 STOCKH 03864 02 OF 02 161408Z

AN ADDITIONAL NEGOTIATING BODY IS ALSO ESTABLISHED WHICH WILL DEAL WITH UNION PROPOSALS FOR ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGES WITHIN THE GOVERNMENT.

8. IN REF (B) US DAO/STOCKHOLM OFFERS FOLLOWING VIEW RE UNIONIZATION OF THE SWEDISH ARMED FORCES: "THE EFFECT OF

UNIONIZATION OF THE SWEDISH ARMED FORCES IS DIFFICULT TO ASSESS. ANY CONCLUSIONS STATED BY THE REPORTING OFFICER WOULD BE HIGHLY SUBJECTIVE AND DIFFICULT IF NOT IMPOSSIBLE, TO SUBSTANTIATE. HOWEVER, BY VIRTUE OF 15 YEARS OF UNIONIZATION, THE SWEDISH ARMED FORCES ARE LARGELY A 40 HOUR PER WEEK MAXIMUM FORCE. REGULAR PERSONNEL RECEIVE OVERTIME PAY OR COMPENSATORY TIME FOR ANY DUTY IN EXCESS OF A 40 HOUR WEEK. DISCIPLINARY POWERS HAVE ALMOST ENTIRELY BEEN ABROGATED TO CIVIL JUDICIARY AUTHORITIES OR TO UNION AUTHORITIES. THE PROBLEMS OF OVER-DEMOCRATIZATION CANNOT BE TIED DIRECTLY TO UNIONS ANY MORE SO THAN PERMISSIVENESS THROUGHOUT THE SOCIETY CAN BE TIED TO LABOR MOVEMENT. THE SWEDISH ARMED FORCES ARE LARGELY A CROSS SECTION OF THE SWEDISH POPULACE AND TO TRY TO PIN THEIR ILLS TO UNIONIZATION WOULD BE LARGELY FRUITLESS. WHILE SUBVERSION WITHIN THE SWEDISH ARMED FORCES HAS BEEN ON A GRADUAL INCREASE OVER THE LAST 5 TO 10 YEARS, THIS HAS RESULTED LARGELY FROM THE LEFTIST DISSIDENT ORGANIZATIONS WITHIN THE COUNTRY, I.E. THE COMMUNIST PARTY, KFML(4), ETC., BUT WITH NO APPARENT DIRECTION OR INFLUENCE FROM ANY LABOR ORGANIZATION AS SUCH. THE SWEDISH MINISTRY OF DEFENSE STATES AS FOLLOWS: 'IT CANNOT BE CLAIMED THAT UNIONS HAVE EXERTED ANY DIRECT INFLUENCE ON READINESS'. THIS STATEMENT CANNOT BE DISPROVED EXCEPT PERHAPS IN EXTREMELY SUBJECTIVE TERMS."

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